

MEETING NOTES
CHETCO RIVER GRAVEL REMOVAL
TECHNICAL TEAM MEETING
NOVEMBER 20, 2007
1:00 to 3:00

ATTENDEES:

Judy Linton, US Army Corps of Engineers
Janine Castro, US Fish and Wildlife Service
Chuck Wheeler, National Marine Fisheries Service
Yvonne Vallette, Environmental Protection Agency
Bob Lobdell, Oregon Department of State Lands
Alex Cyril, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality
Jay Charland, Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development (phone)
Patty Snow, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
Robert Elayer, Tidewater Contractors, Inc
Bill Yocum, Freeman Rock, Inc
Chris Lidstone, Lidstone and Associates, Inc (phone)
Jim O'Connor, US Geological Survey
Glen Hess, US Geological Survey

AGENDA ITEMS:

1) Administrative Details:

Mission: The focus of the Technical Team is evaluating specific watersheds to objectively determine whether gravel mining can occur on a short-term or long-term basis. Such evaluation will include looking at direct and indirect impacts to sediment movement. Meetings are not to evaluate or discuss specific permit actions which may be under review by either the Corps of Engineers (Corps) or Department of State Lands (DSL).

Organization: The Corps and DSL will act as co-chairs for the Technical Team and will be responsible for setting up meetings, taking notes and generally making sure there is follow through with identified action items. Draft meeting notes will be sent to meeting participants for review prior to becoming final.

The Team will attempt to reach agreement on future actions – any insurmountable disagreements will be raised to the Executive Team for resolution.

Membership: It was agreed the membership should be fluid based on the watershed being studied.

2) Process and Data/Information Needs:

Timelines: The timelines for existing Chetco River gravel mining authorizations for Freeman Rock and Tidewater were clarified. The Department of the Army permit expires September 2009; Water Quality Certification is valid until August 2009; DSL permits require annual renewal for work occurring beyond 2008; and the Biological Opinions provide endangered species coverage through the 2008 work season (which runs from July 15 through September 30 above the Chetco River estuary). Therefore, if it is determined further mining can occur in the Chetco River beyond the 2008 season, permits must be in place by spring of 2009 for mining to occur uninterrupted. At the November 15 Executive Team meeting it was suggested this Phase 2 study be completed by spring 2008 to allow one full year to complete the permit process should that be the direction taken. The Technical Team is concerned this timeframe will not provide adequate time for data to be collected and evaluated.

Information Needs/Process to Obtain Information: Sediment budget information is crucial. Most of the winter high flows have already passed so we may not be able to collect any data this year. Jim O'Connor suggested there may be a way to estimate sediment budget information without doing actual measurements, which can be refined as data is collected over time. He will have a better idea once he has a chance to review the Phase 1 work. USGS will also evaluate the Phase 1 work to determine if there is better way to structure the determination of whether a system is aggrading, degrading, or in equilibrium.

USGS could do sediment transport studies. They will need to know the specific questions to be answered (including timelines and spatial scope) and then can prepare a draft scope of work to include required funding (estimated). This scope of work would include 1) data collection that can be done within the immediate timelines and 2) data collection that can be done given a longer time period. Subsequent to the Chetco process, as we move forward to tackle more watersheds, USGS suggested it may make most sense to pick one river system that can represent all coastal systems rather than evaluate all systems separately. (*Post meeting note: whether one river system can represent all or a group of river systems for purposes of simplifying the necessary evaluation process caused much discussion in email comments stemming from the review of the draft meeting notes. This question will not be resolved here but needs to be given further consideration*). USGS estimated it will be the 1st or 2nd week of January 2008 before they are able to provide the draft scope of work. The Technical Team needs to recommend to the Executive Team that funding for USGS work is crucial.

Additional information that may be beneficial:

- 1) Cross-sectional information provided by the operators could potentially be used if combined with known water events. The evaluation would also need to include review of aerial photos at these same cross-sections.
- 2) Monitoring reports as required under existing mining permits. Freeman Rock has collected data and will have the reports out by December. Although Tidewater did not

mine in 2007 they do have pre-mine surveys and will also be doing pre-mine surveys in 2008.

3) Pre-mine surveys at Tidewater Bar: This information has been collected for past two years.

4) Suggestion made that we should also look at site specific responses to gravel removal within watersheds.

Regarding evaluation of other watersheds, the group agreed we need direction from the Executive Team on prioritization beyond the Umpqua River system (which will be studied next). DSL has a list of active gravel operators; the Corps has a list of pending permit applications which needs to be updated to add the Coquille River and Hunter Creek. The mention of Hunter Creek raised the question of how we will deal with sub-basins. All agreed that we should recommend to the Executive Team that we start the Phase 1 study process for the Umpqua River. The Executive Team will need to decide who will pull together the final product for that effort, however, as Janine is pretty well tied up with other work well into next year.

3) Next Steps:

- Brief the Executive Team at their December 19 meeting on Technical Team organization details and information needed for Phase 2 study work. Execs also need to be briefed on work being done by USGS to assist the Technical Team in refining information needs and estimated timelines. (It was suggested that perhaps the Executive Team should postpone their December meeting until more information is available about what data collection is possible).
- The next meeting of the Technical Team will be scheduled around mid-January (exact date pending receipt of draft scope of work from USGS).